

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP**  
**INTELLIGENCE REPORT**

COUNTRY Syria

SUBJECT Ports of Latakia and  
Tartus  
25X1A6a

ORIGIN

This document is hereby regraded to  
CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the  
letter of 16 October 1973 from the  
Director of Central Intelligence to the  
Archivist of the United States.  
Next Review Date: 2008

DATE: 25X1A6a

INFO.

DIST. February 1947

PAGES

SUPPLEMENT

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1. In the original project for the 1947 budget, as presented by the Ministry of Public Works, there was an item of LLS 5,000 for the survey of the Port of Latakia. In the final budget project, presented by the government and voted by Parliament, this item was replaced by one of LLS 105,000 for a survey of the entire Syrian littoral, in order to decide upon the location of a future port for Syria.
2. This change was effected through the efforts of Ryad 'Abd al-Rizzaq, deputy from Tartus. When the original budget was proposed, he shrewdly refrained from campaigning directly for Tartus as the site of the future Syrian port, and advocated a thorough and impartial survey of all possible locations on the Syrian coast. He instigated a barrage of letters and telegrams from all parts of Syria, demanding that the government establish a port of Syria in the interest of all Syria, and not a port of Latakia in the sole interest of that town. He publicly stated that Major Holt, the Alexander Gibb and Company expert who wrote a two-page report endorsing Latakia, had spent only five days there and had visited no other site. Abd-al-Rizzaq headed off delegations from Latakia to the President and Prime Minister, by adopting a disinterested attitude of concern for the general welfare, and so shamed these officials into acquiescence. Finally, 'Abd al-Rizzaq swung his six votes in Parliament away from Khalid al-'Asm (Minister of National Economy and Justice in the Jabri Cabinet) at the time of the governmental vote of confidence, and gave them to the government, with the change in the budget, as given in paragraph 1 above, as his price.

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Ryad 'Abd al-Rizzaq is not only deputy from Tartus, but Mayor of that town and the largest landowner in Tartus and vicinity. He has from the beginning been a relentless foe of the port of Latakia plan. His advocacy of Tartus as the port of Syria is partly founded on his desire for the aggrandizement of his own and his town's fortunes, but is also based on sound consideration of the public benefit. Tartus and vicinity offer all the advantages which Latakia has not: a good deep-water anchorage, sheltered by the island of Arwad; a central location on the coast; easy access to road and rail facilities to Central Syria via the Hama gap; and, the most advantageous terminus in Syria for the Arabian-American pipeline. This last consideration is not lost on Ryad 'Abd al-Rizzaq, who is the strongest advocate of the signing by Syria of the agreement with the Arabian-American Oil Company.

Document No. 008

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NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

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Auth: IDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Date: 27 Mar 1998

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